3: Chinnery G, E-5 (1929) 1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10

161 As the population of these villages was apparently not enumerated
162 until 1921, it is not possible to draw a comparative table covering the period between Hoffman's survey* and the present investigation. Hoffman's enumeration of the people between Kavcing and Tekirot for 1911, which included villages not within the area now recorded resulted in—

—	Adults.		Children.		Working Total.
1911.. ..	3,415	2,016	695	655	810
1912..	3,418	2,020	697	669	1,147

The additional figures for 1912 do not indicate an increase in the population. They appear to represent mainly members of the community who were not counted in 1911.

The official figures taken during the Australian Administration are as follow:—

—	Adults.		Children.		Total.		Absent.	Grand Total.
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.		
1922–23 ..	4,020	2,407	911	1,066	4,931	3,473	..	8,404
1923–24.. ..	2,663	2,393	1,046	909	3,709	3,302	..	7,011
1924–25.. ..	2,684	2,379	1.137	957	3,821	3,336	..	7,157
1925–26.. ..	2,570	2.635	1,092	973	3,662	3,608	..	7,270
1927–28.. ..	2,398	2,530	1,157	1,047	3 555	3,577	..	7,132
1928–29.. ..	2,291	2,431	1,256	1,118	3,547	3,549	..	7,096
My enumeration (not including Bagail Village) ..	2,592	2,565	1,097	1,027	3,689	3,592	1,072 153	8,506

The above figures vary considerably, but to what extent these variations are due to fluctuations in the population it is not possible to say.

161 It has been shown that the population declined to an alarming
[131] extent during the last few years of German Administration. It is also probable that a considerable loss of life resulted from the famine of 1914. The epidemics of influenza that raged through the world during 1918 and the year following also took their toll of the district. There is every indication now, however, that in places the population of the east coast of New Ireland is beginning to hold its own, and, if people of the villages that are in need of special treatment can be induced to follow the advice of the Government in regard to plans especially designed for their benefit, conditions at present arresting their development should be removed and a healthier situation created. It must be remembered, however, that any programme for the improvement of the natives which threatens to change existing

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*Dr. Hoffman; *Government Gazette*, German New Guinea, 1st June, 1913.

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which gives each of them what they lack. In the vicinity of Lambuso, Pinigindu, Lemasong and Lugagun are sago swamps, which are relied upon in time of famine to support the people of the lower road, the owners then reaping large supplies of shell-money by selling the sago. 438 [261]

Dry spells from time to time produce food shortages, but as a rule these are apparently not very serious. In 1914 (?), however, no rain fell for about a year (?), and the people were in great distress. The whole country suffered from drought, and, excepting from the sago swamps, there was practically no food procurable. The period of drought and famine culminated in a series of destructive bush fires along the whole line of coast, bush and mountain ranges, and, from the graphic descriptions given to me, everything perished—wallabies, in fact, have scarcely been seen since. It is extremely probable that a great loss of life followed this period of famine. The natives said that only those with plenty of shell-money were able to keep themselves supplied with sago. People scattered far and wide, especially in the direction of Tabr, looking for food. 731

The natives now divide their time between work in their gardens and work on road maintenance, and it is possible that in some areas the demands of the road at times lead to neglect of garden work. The people of the mountain villages have villages on the coast, to which they come for a few days when their road services are due. I think this division of work and the areas for which the various villages are responsible should be made the subject of a special investigation by the district officials. Mr. Waugh, the District Officer, has in mind a scheme for the maintenance of a mobile road gang, with adequate transport facilities. If something of the kind were possible the natives could spend more time in their gardens and coco-nut groves. 421 491 651

HOUSING.

When I first went down the Kavieng road in 1924 most of the natives' houses were small, neat-looking, rectangular structures built on piles some feet above the ground. This was a standard pattern that had been introduced by the District Officials. On this occasion, however, I noticed that in most of the villages the people were living in their old type of house. Whether these are healthier than the introduced structures I cannot tell, but it seems to me much better to improve the structure they desire to live in than to force them to build houses which they will probably vacate as soon as the Government official's back is turned. The type of house, the erection of it, and everything connected with it, is definitely part of native culture and as such should be preserved as far as possible. 342 362